

**News Advisory  
August 22, 2003**

**Davenport's First Neighborhood  
Presents  
"Beiderbecke Family Homes"  
The Gold Coast & Hamburg Historic District Home Tour**

This year's Gold Coast & Hamburg Historic District Association home tour continues the celebration of Bix Beiderbecke's 100th year with a tour of homes where the family lived, played and prospered. From the early residences of Bix's grandfather to the homes of his aunt, uncle and cousin, members of the Gold Coast & Hamburg Historic District Association are proud to share their part of the Bix heritage.

The first industrialists, bankers and entrepreneurs of the area, many of German heritage like the Beiderbecke's, originally funded the construction of homes in this neighborhood. They admired the bluffs overlooking Davenport and the Mississippi for their home sites and commissioned noted architects of the day to build extraordinary Queen Anne, Italianate and Gothic Revival homes.

This year's historic home tour, "Beiderbecke Family Homes," will open five homes and the old Germania Haus Hotel, now the German American Heritage Center, to the public. All the homes in this tour have a significant tie to the Beiderbecke family.

"Many of the architects represented here did some very important work in the Quad Cities area," says GC & HHDA president Troy Smith. "And many of their best commissions are right here in the Hamburg Historic District. That's just one of the reasons why we're on the National Historic Register."

Federal, Gothic and Greek Revival architectural styles are prominent throughout the neighborhood and were among the first built between 1840 and 1870. The more elaborate styles of the era, Victorian Queen Anne, Gothic Revival and the then modern American Four-Square are also a common thread through the neighborhood. Though the homes in this neighborhood were once largely in varied states of disrepair, the current owners see themselves as stewards of these magnificent homes for future generations.

According to spokesman Dennis LaRoque, owner of the Beiderbecke Inn, "The goal of the tour is the promotion, preservation and beautification of historic homes and neighborhoods. All the money is used to increase historic awareness and promote a real sense of involved community." This tour is planned and conducted through the efforts of the Gold Coast & Hamburg Historic District Association.

**EVENT DETAILS:**

**Sunday, September 7th Hours: 11am to 4pm (Rain or Shine!)**

**Tickets: Pre-tour sale \$7, at Alcoa Employees & Community Credit Union.  
On tour day, \$8 at the corner of Seventh & Western Streets,  
and at tour homes.**

**Children under 12 years may tour for free but must be accompanied by an adult.**

**Music will be provided by the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Youth Band.**

Antique Car Display through the courtesy of the Mississippi Valley Regional Antique Automobile Club of America (AACAA), and the Quad Cities Antique Ford Club

Food and refreshments will be provided by City Center Ministries.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Dennis LaRoque - dlaroque@machlink.com 563-323-0047

William Rogers - wlrogers@earthlink.net 563-324-4770

High-resolution digital photos and tour maps are available.

**DETAILS OF THE TOUR HOMES**

**The Beiderbecke-Best Home, 1864**

619 West Sixth Street

Built shortly after the Civil War, this brick home is a fine example of the Greek Revival style typical of early homes built on the Gold Coast. The young grocery wholesaler, Charles Beiderbecke, emigrated from Prussia in the late 1800s and established the Beiderbecke-Miller Wholesale Grocery. During the 1870s, Beiderbecke resided here with his family until building his new home on West Seventh Street just two blocks away in 1880. During the 1880s and 1890s, Louis P. Best, vice-president of Davenport Foundries purchased the house and resided here, adding servant's quarters, a formal dining room, master bedroom and south-facing bay windows. The house next received a completely new hip-roof construction to harmonize the additions with the existing structure.

The formal dining room is paneled in quarter-sawn white oak and remained intact until the mid-80s when vandals removed the fireplace mantel. During its deterioration phase, the house was once home to six apartments with plans for a seventh in the attic. These plans were never realized as the house had fallen into a state of considerable disrepair and was eventually scheduled for demolition. The current owner is restoring the house to a single-family home.

**The Charles & Louise Beiderbecke Sr. Home, 1881**

532 West Seventh Street

The next Beiderbecke Sr. home was the vision of Davenport's most successful grocery wholesaler in the period between the Civil War and 1900. In addition to the grocery firm, Beiderbecke served as director of the German Savings Bank was president of the Iowa National Bank until his death in 1901. As a German immigrant, Beiderbecke was an active leader in the German Turner Society and the German Mannerchor. The family was significantly involved in the cultural and musical development of Davenport and aided the establishment of the opera house and choral groups. The musical influence carried over to the design of the house, which includes an orchestra pit and provided what must certainly have been the beginnings of his grandson Bix's legendary career as a jazz musician.

The most elaborate example of Gothic Revival style in Davenport, this house has no less than eight fireplaces in both wood and marble surrounds, elaborate chestnut and butternut woodwork and hickory front doors. The first floor has elaborate double parlors and a library. Despite major damage done to the house after it had been converted to a four-plex during its deterioration phase, the current owners have completed the restoration by replicating the original slate roof, completely rebuilding the chimneys, porte-cochere, and the southeast tower. The Beiderbecke home is currently open to the public as the renowned bed and breakfast, The Beiderbecke Inn.

**The Carl Beiderbecke Home, 1890**

### 510 West Seventh Street

Built by H. O. Seiffert as a wedding gift for his daughter, Adelle, the Carl Beiderbecke Home is a superb example of Late Queen Anne architectural style. Carl and Adelle Beiderbecke raised four children in the house. During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cousin Bix was a frequent visitor in his aunt and uncle's home. Following Carl's death in 1934, Adelle sold the house to a Beiderbecke cousin, Catherine Kautz, who lived there until 1967. The house changed hands several times in the 1980s and eventually fell into a state of disrepair. The home was purchased in 1989 by Gary and Jane Reab who completed significant restoration. The Schroeder family has continued this work since 1995.

This Beiderbecke home features a denticular exterior cornice, handsomely pedimented gables and a Palladian window in the front gable on the second floor. The first floor boasts spacious front and back porches, with beautiful oak and cherry floors and staircases and both stained and leaded glass throughout the interior of the first floor.

### **The A. J. Hirschel - H. O. Seiffert Home, c. 1890**

#### 532 West Sixth Street

H. O. Seiffert was born in 1845 in Schoenburg, Germany. After immigrating to the United States, he settled in Avoca, Iowa where he established himself buying and selling land in western Iowa. As his fortune grew, he used it to open the H. O. Seiffert Lumber Company there. When he decided to start his family, he chose to move to Davenport to provide better educational opportunities for his children. This home was built sometime between 1885 and 1892 by A. J. Hirschel, a Hungarian attorney for the firm of Hinz and Hirschel. Seiffert bought the home in 1892 and moved into the house. Seiffert then opened the largest branch of his chain of lumber outlets in Davenport, which spread the chain across Iowa. As a resident of Davenport, he served as the first director of Citizen's Trust and Savings Bank and later, director and vice-president of the German Savings Bank. He resided in this home until his death in 1940.

This home is a significant example of the Queen Anne style. Originally a smaller house, the east and north portions were added during the Seiffert era. The large wrap-around porch was added a few years later. After Mr. Seiffert's passing, the house was broken up into apartments and gradually fell into disrepair. In 1991 the city of Davenport threatened to condemn the house, but the Davenport Bank and Trust Company was willing to loan the necessary restoration capital. The current owners continue the process of restoring the house.

### **The Louis Hanssen Jr. Home, 1894**

#### 504 West Seventh Street

Louis Hanssen Jr. was born in January of 1864 at 211 West Second Street, and lived in Davenport his entire life. From 1884 until 1890 he worked as a billing clerk for Serg and Williams of Davenport, a competitor to his father's store. From 1890 until 1897, Louis was a teller for the Davenport Bank (presently Wells Fargo). In 1897 he became the treasurer of Louis Hanssen Sons Hardware and by 1901 he was president and treasurer. In September of 1888 he married Paula Bruhn and they resided at 211-215 West Second Street above the store. They moved in to their home at 504 West Seventh Street when it was completed in 1894. Both Louis and Paula resided in the home until their deaths—Louis in 1927 and Paula in 1939.

The house was designed by Louis' brother, Gustav Hanssen, who also designed the Weise home at 709 Brown Street. Louis' father and brother also resided in the neighborhood at 727 West Seventh Street and 629 Brown Street. This home is a modified American Four-

Square with a four-season porch, circular staircase and widow's walk, one of the few examples of this architectural feature remaining in the neighborhood.

**Germania Haus Hotel (German American Heritage Center), 1862**

712 W. Second Street

The German American Heritage Center was founded as the "Germania Haus" hotel in 1862 to accommodate thousands of immigrant-settlers that funneled across the river and through Davenport, arriving by riverboat, train, wagon, and on foot to settle nearby and to many points West. The Center building is ideally located very near the riverfront, serving as one of the original gateways to the city, just as it does today at the foot of the Centennial Bridge. In 1876, German immigrant and Davenport manufacturer John Fredrick Miller purchased the hotel, operating it as "Miller Hotel" until 1889 and adding a third floor with a beautiful cornice located on the southeast corner of the building.

This historic structure was purchased and rehabilitated by the German American Heritage Center in 1995, and opened to the public in May 2000. The Center includes exhibits on early German immigrants to the area, historic workshops, lectures, and a variety of programs for adults and children. Normal hours are Saturday and Sunday, 1:00-4:00PM. The Center will be open 11:00AM-4:00PM the day of the tour.